

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 184

By Norris

A RESOLUTION to recognize Judge Larry E. Potter for his honorable and astute service to the State of Tennessee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those exemplary jurists who have distinguished themselves among their fellow members of the bench and the bar alike; and

WHEREAS, one such jurist is the Honorable Judge Larry E. Potter, who will be presented with the 2017 Love Where You Live Award at the Keep Tennessee Beautiful 2017 Great American Cleanup Kickoff on March 9, 2017; and

WHEREAS, born in Nashville and raised in Milan, Judge Larry Potter graduated from high school in 1965; he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education and History from the University of Tennessee at Martin in 1969 and a Master in Education Administration degree from Austin Peay State University after serving as a teacher and principal at East Elementary School in Lyles; and

WHEREAS, in 1973, Judge Potter served under Tennessee Personnel Commissioner Jane Hardaway as a management consultant; in 1974, Commissioner Hardaway selected him to serve as her Middle Tennessee field representative in her campaign to run for the Public Service Commission; and

WHEREAS, after the campaign, Judge Potter continued his education and received his Juris Doctorate degree in 1977 from the University of Memphis Law School, his brother's alma mater; and

WHEREAS, in 1978, he began his career with the City of Memphis, serving as assistant city public defender, chief public defender, assistant city prosecutor, and assistant city attorney

before his appointment at the age of thirty-five to the City Court Bench Division Two in 1982 by Mayor Wyeth Chandler, thereby becoming one of the youngest judges to serve on the bench; and

WHEREAS, during his first year on the bench, Judge Larry Potter helped create the Memphis Environmental Court, the first environmental court in Tennessee and the third of its kind in the United States; many of the concepts that are now standard in environmental courts were designed and developed under Judge Potter's leadership; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, Judge Potter helped write a law that created a countywide environmental court with injunctive authority to deal with the environmental problems facing Memphis and Shelby County; that same year, the Tennessee legislature established the Shelby County Environmental Court, the first countywide court of its type in the nation; and

WHEREAS, widely considered among his peers as the "Father of Environmental Courts" in America, Judge Potter travels to major cities across the nation, consulting city leaders and helping them to establish environmental courts; and

WHEREAS, active in his community, Judge Larry Potter serves as a member of the Shelby County Pension Board and is past chair of the Governor's Environmental Advisory Council and Keep Tennessee Beautiful; and

WHEREAS, Judge Potter is a faithful member of Advent Presbyterian Church, and has served as deacon and elder in the Presbyterian Church of America; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to awards and accolades, Judge Potter received the Iron Eyes Cody Award from Keep America Beautiful in 2006 in recognition of his role in raising public awareness and advancing environmental compliance within the judicial system of America; the Robert Sparks Walker Lifetime Achievement Award from the Tennessee Governor's Environmental Stewardship Program in 2009; the Law Enforcement Recognition Award from Keep America Beautiful in 2013; and the Memphis Rotary Club's Bobby Dunavant Public Servant Award; and

WHEREAS, Judge Larry Potter is most grateful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife, Patti Yeiser Potter; three children, Jason Potter, Erin Potter Kerr, and Mary Kathryn Yeiser; and three grandchildren, Grace Kerr, Sam Kerr, and Blythe Potter; and

WHEREAS, for more than forty years, Judge Larry E. Potter has been a proven leader, judicial innovator, and man of great wisdom and compassion for the citizens he serves; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Judge Larry E. Potter for his dedication to the State of Tennessee and its citizens; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize and honor the Honorable Judge Larry E. Potter for his longstanding commitment to the noble precepts of public service and extend to him our best wishes for continued success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.